

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Community Youth Concepts

Application ID: 14AC156634

Program Name: Youth Service Momentum AmeriCorps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant provides a number of relevant data sources that effectively provide a picture of needed intervention for youth engagement in the community.

Comprehensive evidence is provided to support the need to engage at-risk youth in the targeted communities.

The application includes comprehensive data documenting the prevalence of the risk factors associated with youth disengagement in the targeted communities.

The program presents data demonstrating the strength of service learning opportunities to help to diminish the risk factors associated with youth disengagement.

The application also includes data from a study highlighting the increased high risk behavior for adolescents between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm, the times that this proposed service learning program will operate.

The applicant cites specific, relevant data from the target counties from the Iowa Youth Survey on youth engagement.

The applicant provides specific data on the gap in appropriate out-of-school times for youth.

The applicant cites data linking together the risk factors, the importance of youth engagement for positive youth development, and service learning.

The logic model and Theory of Change are compelling and support the proposed program.

The applicant describes a well-aligned Theory of Change through program intervention and a logical sequence of

inputs, activities and outputs to engage at-risk youth.

The logic model and Theory of Change are consistent in their presentation of the proposed intervention and expected outcomes.

The applicant developed a comprehensive program design and performance measures through a planning grant opportunity.

The dosage of the proposed program is appropriate to continued involvement of the target youth, but done over time to ensure positive, longer-term outcomes.

The activities in the proposed program are described in detail and provide appropriate choices for meaningful youth service.

The evidence cited strongly supports the program intervention.

The program is based on an established and validated intervention that has been shown to yield the expected outcomes. This program model is listed on a number of national lists of evidenced-based practices demonstrating that it meets the research threshold for this classification.

The applicant utilizes a model program that has been proven to produce positive youth development outcomes.

The program intends to assess the characteristics of the host organizations to insure that the program model is being implemented with fidelity to the characteristics of the evidenced-based model.

The applicant has a significant history of working with diverse populations of youth and engaging the youth in service hours in the community.

The applicant has experience in service learning and in working with diverse youth.

The targeted community had an AmeriCorps planning grant to build their capacity to implement a program such as this. While they have not had a previous AmeriCorps program, the target community has been implementing service learning programs.

Weaknesses:

The data provided lacks national or other relevant comparison.

The application did not include state-level statistics for risk factors to allow for comparison and determination of the relative need within the identified communities.

The applicant fails to state that the absolute levels of the data cited are a problem and does not compare local data from the target communities to statewide or national data.

The research cited to demonstrate the appropriateness of the planned program to meet the intended outcomes did not include the demographic and risk profiles of the youth studied, making it difficult to understand if similar outcomes could be expected for the proposed population.

The applicant provides limited information about how successful the applicant has been in meeting program goals.

The applicant did not significantly document previous problems that it resolved or to what extent problems were addressed in its previous experience working with at-risk youth.